

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, Rhode Island


Factors Affecting the Defense-State
Operational Partnership

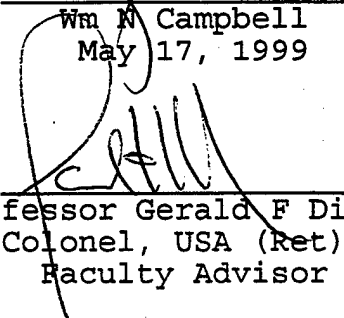
by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.


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May 17, 1999


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Factors Affecting the Defense-State

Operational Partnership

Introduction

The Executive Branch Departments of Defense and State are wary former roommates who, by necessity, have continued to work together after moving into separate accommodations, having shared the Old Executive Office Building next door to the White House in Washington for many years. Defense did not actually exist when the two parted company, since the arranged marriage between its two principal components of the Navy and War Departments had not yet taken place, but the analogy is useful.

Defense, always the larger enterprise, has fared better by any business school objective comparison, growing to a size, complexity, and scope unimaginable in 1940. State has experienced much more modest absolute growth, but nevertheless has expanded activities well beyond what any clairvoyant before the Second World War could have foreseen. It has experienced frequent competition for foreign policy primacy within the Executive Branch, not just from such obvious sources as Defense, Commerce, and the Treasury, but even from the new-kid-on-the-block National Security Council Staff (that ironically occupies the Old Executive Office Building and is staffed by large numbers of State and Defense person-

nel). Executive Branch bureaucratic policy battles are beyond the scope of this paper, which is confined to operational activity involving Defense and State.

State generally has succeeded in retaining Executive Branch primacy in the operational aspects of foreign affairs, despite more than occasional disputes within administrations. Defense plays a major role in many official American international activities, so co-ordination and cooperation between the two are important to the success of such efforts. Differences in institutional cultures and standard operating procedures between the two departments do not always make this easy. Each must strive continually to learn from the other, and to accept that complete agreement often is unlikely. Both have tried, but the operational conduct of the nation's business overseas is affected often by missed or ignored signals between the two.

This paper compares Defense and State organizational cultures (Attachment I) and evacuation attitudes (Attachment III), and discusses the effects of similarities and differences on working-level coordination. Defense characterizations are derived from both published sources and interviews. State attributes are the result of interviews with senior State officials.

State currently reimburses Defense for assistance during noncombatant evacuation and other joint operations. Both agencies would benefit directly if State used this money to provide its employees the practical training in evacuation

and other crisis skills that Defense routinely provides its personnel. Reimbursement reallocation also would allow State to coordinate better with Defense prior to and during joint operations. Reallocation is possible, if National Command Authorities determine that changes to existing policies are in the national interest.

Recent academic literature has identified the need for military and civilian cooperation, but generally within the context of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs). The need for cooperation within the Government may be so fundamental as to be assumed, but Defense-State cooperation is too critical to be left to chance. It is more important than any Defense relationship with voluntary relief agencies, because it involves most Government activities overseas, not just those in one or several areas.

Defining the Operational Environment

U.S. Army Field Manual 100-23 defines peace operation as a generic term covering military and political activities that include peacemaking, peace building, and peace-enforcement in addition to traditional peacekeeping. These activities differ from one another in the level of outside effort needed to compel potential or former belligerents to settle their disputes peacefully¹. Traditional peacekeeping involves the most permissive political environment and is the least likely to require combat by assigned peace forces. Peace-enforcement situations involve the least amount of political

cooperation within the area or state, and are most likely to put assigned peace forces in situations that risk armed conflict. Critical variables include level of consent by involved parties, level of force necessary to impose or enforce settlement, and degree of impartiality exhibited by assigned forces.

Any American peace operation today almost certainly will be both joint and combined in nature; joint because more than one service branch will be involved, and combined because the United States is more likely to participate in such operations on a multilateral basis. Kenneth Allard states that the United States when possible has avoided unilateral interventions since 1989 because multilateral action shares the burden (and risk) while assuring wide support for actions². The collapse of the Soviet Union has allowed the United States such latitude, at least for the moment, but multilateral action complicates planning and decision-making. Lack of complementary military doctrine, competency, and capabilities among potential partner forces may offset to a large degree any benefits from a width of international support³. America must believe that it is receiving an adequate return on the extra effort needed in such instances for it to continue combined operations, and this ongoing calculation is political, not military.

The nature of international disputes also is changing, to reflect relatively less traditional *inter-state* conflict and more *intra-state* turmoil, an environment symbolized by

the 'failed state'⁴. Conflicts involving failed states are characterized by a breakdown in internal order and collapse of the civil infrastructure and services, generally with gross violations of human rights and a resultant creation of many refugees. Planning for even the most limited peace operation in such an environment must address humanitarian considerations to a larger and more immediate extent than was previously required. Actions that combine humanitarian assistance with peace operations are called 'complex contingencies'⁵. They usually involve belligerents employing asymmetrical means to achieve blatantly political objectives, as well as the presence of nongovernmental, private voluntary, and international organizations and the media.

Much of the current literature discusses peace operation variants as more or less distinct types of situations, characterized by different levels of such key attributes as civil-military relations, political ramifications, and the multinational nature of the environment. Maurice Todd suggests that peace operations really coexist with one another along a peace continuum, since each is defined by comparing it to the others in relative amounts of the same features⁶. An intervening force, according to this perspective, could find itself moving (or moved) from one type of operation to another, if one or more critical variables change significantly. Disaster may lurk if force composition, size, and objective do not keep pace with the environment. Decision-makers therefore must reevaluate the objective frequently.

Chris Seiple makes a logical case for changes in military thinking and actions to facilitate a successful humanitarian operation in conjunction with NGO activity⁷. He argues that both the military and volunteer humanitarian communities should adjust to one another in altruistic self-interest to permit fullest application of the comparative advantage each brings to a potential relationship and crisis. Differences in individual motives and interests are not important. The military provides an infrastructure of communications, logistics, and security that permits NGOs to function. NGOs contribute humanitarian expertise, sustained commitment, and familiarity with the affected area. The military helps the NGOs succeed; this success allows the military to depart sooner. Both profit, as do recipients of the humanitarian aid, the ultimate beneficiaries.

This argument has major parallels for the Defense-State relationship. Both bring special qualities to a situation, are unlikely to have all the resources or information necessary to respond adequately to a major crisis, and can be more effective working in concert with the other. They frequently have more in common than immediately apparent, but they may have a good deal less in common than some might assume.

The Players and their Scorecards

Attachment I contrasts important cultural characteristics of Defense and State as institutions⁸. Not all individuals in either organization exhibit each attribute, either fully or even in part, but comparisons can be illustrative⁹.

Retention of the original NGO column permits comparison of both Defense and State with a third type of organization with which both work with increasing frequency.

Defense and State both consider themselves disciplined and professional, capable of projecting the will of their Government and nation abroad. Both pride themselves on a 'can-do' attitude when confronted by challenge. The Foreign Service is State's largest and generally dominant component, because of an ambassador's automatic membership within it. Like Defense, the Foreign Service uses an internal personnel system separate from civil service, with rank-in-person and an up-or-out promotion system that affects the way members perceive themselves and their working environment. One retired senior Foreign Service/State officer has characterized the Foreign Service as an "un-uniformed" service¹⁰, reflecting the self-image of a group that sees itself as a select, professional elite, explicitly willing to serve worldwide throughout a career, frequently in physically unhealthful and even dangerous localities, while adhering to restrictions on personal behavior and expression.

The physical remoteness of most State assignment locations requires all employees (officer/generalist, staff/specialist, and contractor) to live and work together with a closeness and informality not replicated either in the developed world or in military bases with their logistical and support infrastructures. Close personal associations develop across technical and professional lines rather than within

more narrow professional spheres, bridging social distances comparable to the officer-enlisted gap in Defense. State also depends heavily on nationals of the host country employed within State offices in that country. They frequently provide crucial continuity of procedure and information as Americans come and go over the years. State considers host national employees as a critical and explicit part of its personnel system, forming a Civil Service/Foreign Service/Host National Employee triad.

Defense personnel rightly pride themselves on personal and unit discipline, and are trained from the first to depend upon a formal chain-of-command for information and instruction. State relies on a much less formal control structure, and has fewer intervening levels between the tactical and the strategic (see Attachment II). Indeed, an Ambassador (also called Chief of Mission), as personal representative of the President to another Chief of State, theoretically can (and occasionally does) report directly to the President. Both organizations are built around a core unit as the basis for frontline operations (ship, air wing, battalion, embassy), but for State the same unit occupies both tactical and operational levels. Defense is accustomed to thinking in terms of command and control, communications, and intelligence (C³I). State strives more for consensus, coordination, cooperation, and assessment (C³A), much like NGOs in Attachment I¹¹, working more for understanding and exchange of information and viewpoint than direct force projection or compliance enforcement.

Defense can prepare an individual or unit for overseas deployment with relatively brief professional training, since the specialized tasks involved generally will be performed within a military support cocoon. Military units often deploy, operate, and return together. State requires significantly more personal education and experience before most individuals truly can perform adequately, since they usually will do with significantly less of an American-style support environment. Members possess much of the necessary education before joining State, but ironically acquire much of the most important experience only in the field. State employees therefore must have a high tolerance for ambiguity, especially in the early stages of their career. They almost always proceed abroad alone, joining an already-in-place and 'perpetually deployed' organization with members that will not return as a unit.

Defense participation in peace operations traditionally has been grudging, as it has been perceived as a distraction from the primary objective of preparing for major force-on-force conflict. Peace operation military planners tend to focus on a specified end date, a tangible time when the action will terminate and the deployed force will return to its primary mission. State almost certainly will have been in place before Defense was tasked to respond, and will remain after Defense departs. It therefore has a different and much longer perspective, one focused more on the host nation. Even a noncombatant evacuation generally will end with some State presence remaining. State in fact can consider an evacuation

as an extension of if not a hybrid kind of peace operation, because an evacuation frequently comes about because of peace operations. Evacuations require particularly close cooperation between Defense and State, and like many peace operations are initiated if not controlled by State. A brief review of differences between the way the two organizations view evacuations can provide interesting insight applicable to true peace operations.

NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS

Evacuations of American citizens from a location without a functioning State office (embassy, consulate general, consulate, or liaison office) are rare. State conducted 123 formal evacuations in the decade ending in 1997, with Defense assisting in 23¹². State closed its offices during twelve of these evacuations, maintaining a presence of essential staff in all the rest after the evacuation was complete and the Defense forces had departed. It reopened most closed posts within a few months of the evacuation, often without enhanced security arrangements beyond the customary local guards and Marine Security Guard Detachments.

While the majority of evacuations were conducted without help from Defense, State does request Defense assistance when timing is critical or the decline in host nation civil control precipitous (for example failing states). Defense frequently suspects that State waits too long to request assistance in many instances due to undue concern for the sensibilities of the host nation government. This is a fair

criticism in some instances, but often overly simplistic. Political and security situations change, sometimes quickly. State calls for help usually involve problems in the final stages of a drawdown, not the beginning.

Time to plan once Washington approves an evacuation can vary greatly (Somalia, 1991 - 3 days; Liberia, 1990 - 10 weeks). Even shorter periods are common. The Ambassador, Combatant Commander, and designated Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander once appointed must communicate continuously¹³, about every facet of the action. The evacuation portion of State's Emergency Action Plan for that office and the Combatant Commander's existing basic evacuation plan for the country should be recent and compatible. An Ambassador makes the official request for Defense assistance, through State channels. Defense tasks the appropriate Combatant Commander to respond if the request is approved, and he in turn sets up a Joint Task Force and designates a JTF Commander to carry out the action. Close Defense-State and Combatant Commander-Ambassador/JTF Commander-Ambassador coordination is crucial if the operation is to succeed. Orders based on current facts are created from existing plans and their assumptions.

Evacuations have been joint since Marines began arriving by ship to help Americans in distress. Recent Defense efforts to emphasize and expand 'jointness' frequently have complicated and sometimes delayed the evacuation process while increasing the cost, from a State perspective. Increasingly specialized forces that arrive have grown in size and sophis-

tication, which can be a plus, but the command and control and support staffs over the horizon have exploded in numbers, which from a State perspective may be unnecessary. Services rendered may not be sufficiently improved to warrant the additional cost, which can be significant. Defense's bill to State for such 'reimbursable services'¹⁴ can vary from thousands to millions of dollars, depending on the size and duration of the operation. Such costs are paid from State's annual budget appropriation. On-scene Defense forces quite rightly do not concern themselves about cost during an evacuation or other such operation, but Washington budget officers do.

Artfully Operational

A former ambassador has observed that the military is most comfortable working within a clear command structure in which they know who works for whom. He believes that ambiguous situations in which this is not clear, or where there is no direct supervisor closer than the President, can create problems for them¹⁵. This describes exactly the position of a JTF Commander. He is responsible for the actual conduct of operations, once the decision is made to conduct an evacuation, but the evacuation must be carried out in coordination with and under guidelines established by the American Ambassador to the country in distress¹⁶. Apparent intentional disruption of unity of command presents special problems. Immediate and specific operational requirements concern both the JTF Commander and the Ambassador in such situations, but the latter also must keep the wariest of eyes on political objec-

tives as well. As Ray Clark summarized, State's view of a situation rather than any plan drives the timing of an evacuation¹⁷. Such an action is a political decision, not a military one. It is a military process controlled by civilians. Political concerns shape tactical actions, constraining and restraining such issues as timing; level and scope of maneuver; rules of engagement; level of security imposed; and even size and composition of population to be assisted. The JTF Commander concerns himself more with tactical issues but the Ambassador falls more within the operational sphere (as shown Attachment II), although he works at both levels.

Evacuations focus on the Operational Art (OpArt) factors time/space/force as much as any direct combat situation. Military forces frequently race to control a particular place in time and with sufficient force to prevent a tragedy or disaster. Defense and State can (and do) differ on appropriate location, adequate force, and particularly 'in time'. Attachment III outlines some of the differences. Defense prefers the quick in-and-out action. State generally has longer term interests. Defense by definition concerns itself mostly with the military aspects of any situation. State, while mindful of such realities, focuses more on the political. Defense enjoys the benefit of doctrine and training. It actually practices the kind of skills needed during evacuations. State plans for the worst, and in fact often has more personally-experienced people on hand during an evacuation than participating Defense personnel, but it cannot exercise its people in the same way as

Defense. Host nations tend to look askance at diplomatic missions that practice evacuations. State frequently thinks of arriving Defense forces first as protectors. Defense prefers to remain in an evacuation mode, to avoid any static defensive posture while State continues its activities beyond that necessary to effect the departure of those wishing to leave.

Shaping Up

Students of management and the behavioral sciences have studied bureaucratic politics and its effect on the activity and output of organizations for more than sixty years¹⁸. Competent managers in business and government are well aware of the basic issues involved, even in the unlikely event that they have not studied them formally. Defense and State have made significant progress in facilitating and institutionalizing cooperation between the two organizations. They have converged, particularly in the last decade, in policy and practice. One small example concerns the definition of evacuation terms, with Defense accepting State's concept and terminology of permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments¹⁹. Such agreement is more than mere gesture. Organizations and individuals require a common language with understood meanings before they can cooperate effectively. Cooperation has become more routine in Washington, through the Washington Liaison Group composed of representatives of involved agencies and other permanent and ad hoc channels.

A recent Ambassador has identified from personal experience several reasons to explain why particular overseas com-

bined operations sometimes do not play out in the field as expected at headquarters, no matter how well planned and coordinated the preparations²⁰. Individuals and groups tend to fall back on familiar routines and procedures when situations become complicated, no matter how much training has preceded the action, and evacuations can produce some of the most complicated and confusing of situations. The relative amount of resources contributed by competing or cooperating groups also can affect the perceived value of conflicting opinions. Senior Defense decision makers are cognizant of State's prescribed role during evacuations, but Defense brings most of the physical resources to any operation in which it participates. When on-the-scene Defense representatives find themselves in disagreement with Embassy recommendations, State opinion can be discounted. Communications is not always easy between (or sometimes even within) different branches of the military services under the most benign circumstances. It is not surprising that Defense and State personnel under stress sometimes experience difficulty in dealing effectively with one another.

State is not immune from such problems internally. Despite a close sense of community within an overseas diplomatic mission, there nevertheless is a definite feeling of 'differentness' between those who perform the reporting or analytical functions (political and economic officers) and those the 'management' responsibilities (consular and administrative officers). Ambassadors traditionally have come more often from the analytical camp, or the private sector. The

managerial side of the post is more likely to be involved in most of the planning and implementation of State evacuation activities, including the working level coordination with Defense representatives and forces. Senior State decision makers must coordinate effectively with their own in order to work well with Defense and other agencies.

What to Do

One way to simplify Defense-State coordination during combined operations would be to remove the pressure of money from operational considerations. Many of State's most fundamental concerns regarding Defense assistance during evacuations (size of arriving force, speed of arrival, amount of supervisory and support staff, duration of operation) involve cost directly or indirectly. Remove cost from the factors State and Defense must address, even after the evacuation is completed, and a myriad of other concerns disappear as well. The amount of money involved is relatively small from a Defense perspective, but often quite large to State because of its much smaller share of the Federal budget. Disputes regarding cost computation are frequent, actual funds transfers regularly delayed, cost of tabulation substantial, and acrimony in both agencies one of the few consistent outcomes of the present cost accounting system. The current process reflects bureaucratic compromise as much as sound accounting practice. Policy makers can change it as they have other governmental funding matrices.

Evacuations are not conducted for the direct benefit of State, but to perform the larger, Government-wide objective

of protecting American citizens. Evacuations are not conducted to remove Embassy staff and their families from danger, but to assist any American citizens at a particular time and place who wish to escape from a dangerous situation. State evacuees are a fact of life in such operations because State has important reasons to be present in so many places, on behalf of all parts of the Government. If post-Cold War Defense efforts are more likely to involve peace operations and other activities such as evacuations than actual combat, as some suggest, then participation in such operations should become a primary mission for Defense rather than a distraction. Such a change would remove most if not all of the justification for other Executive Branch agencies to continue subsidizing (in their perspective) Defense participation in such operations.

Eliminating money as a divisive factor would not by itself remove a single one of the several differences between Defense and State, but it would free both to concentrate more on these differences, rather than expending important energy and time on money. State from a practical standpoint could make better use of such monies not expended in reimbursing Defense for common efforts by funding the kind of training Defense takes for granted. Emergency action or peace operations training teams, composed of recently retired staff and contractors if currently-serving individuals are unavailable, could visit posts to exercise country team members in the kind of planning and implementation skills so critical to effective post crisis operation. Host nation government officials could be included

if training emphasized reaction to such natural crises as earthquake or flood. Other agencies already conduct such training on a limited basis, with excellent results. Acquired skills would transfer easily to evacuations and other issues for which the host nation might be less appreciative of American preparation. State staff could visit the Combatant Commander's headquarters or some other suitable location for specific training with the Defense forces with which State would work should an evacuation or other crisis arise. Present State budget levels preclude such activities.

Another method of improving evacuation procedures which is a natural follow-on from the preceding would be to cross-pollinate further existing exchanges of information and expertise between Defense and State before a crisis arises. Ambassadors routinely visit the Combatant Commander's headquarters for consultations and orientation when first enroute to post from Washington, but it is rare for other country team members to do so during any part of their assignment. In addition to frequent and routine working-level visits, State should consider the assignment of more officers to the Combatant Commander's staff, to provide a more direct and continuous State input to Defense planning and training efforts. Defense should reciprocate by insuring that those individuals most likely to be involved in evacuations or peace operations have more opportunity to visit and become acquainted with the locations and individuals with whom they will be working. The relatively large return from the limited existing exchanges suggests that

any increase will result in important improvements in common understanding and coordination. Every incremental improvement is important, given the possible negative ramifications of any misstep or failure. Only a realistic appraisal of the stakes could have induced Defense and State to make the kind of accommodations they already have attempted and in large measure achieved. That there is more still to do should not detract from those accomplishments already achieved. Additional incremental improvements can make a difference. Speaking as one likely to be on the receiving end of Defense efforts during a future evacuation, State will only benefit from any additional enhancements.

End Notes

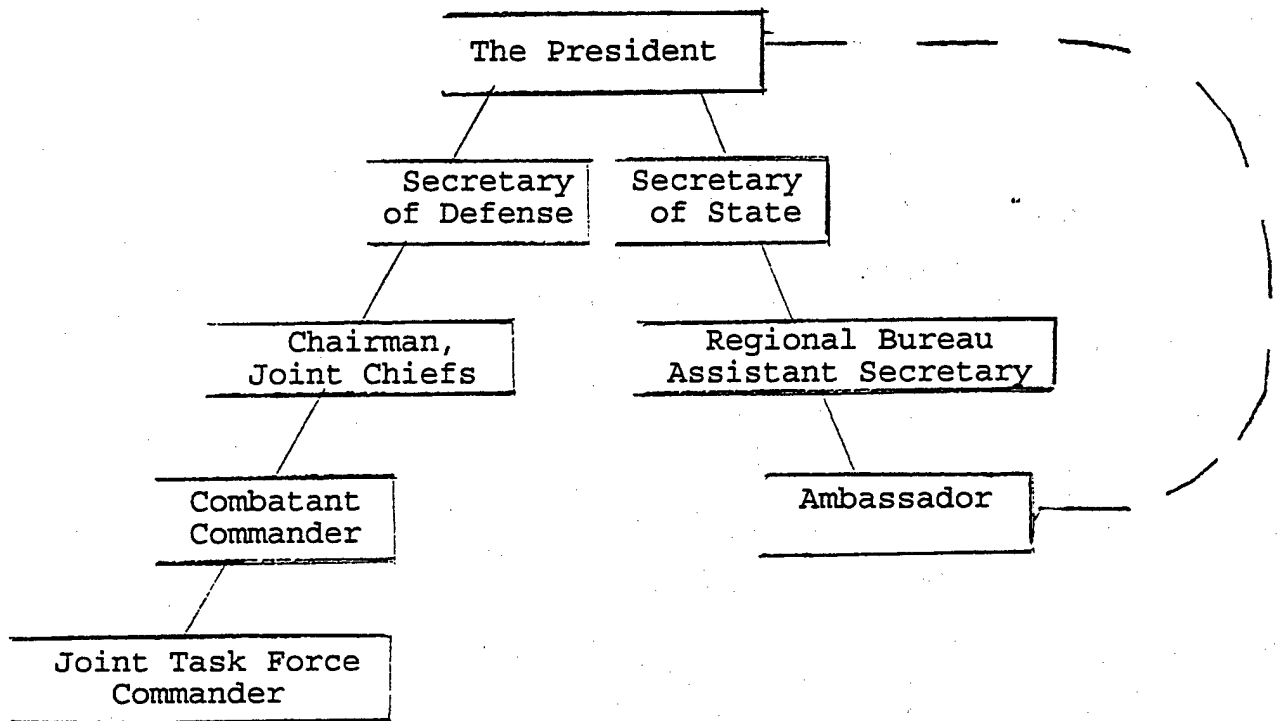
- ¹ Department of the Army, Peace Operations (Field Manual 100-23) (Washington, DC:1994), 2.
- ² Allard, Kenneth, Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned (Washington, DC, National Defense University Press, 1995), xv.
- ³ Ibid, 10.
- ⁴ Joint Warfighting Center, Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations (Fort Monroe, VA: 1997), ii.
- ⁵ Ibid
- ⁶ Todd, Maurice, "Army Tactical Requirements for Peace Support Operations," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1994), 35.
- ⁷ Seiple, Chris, The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions (Carlisle, PA, U.S. Army War College, 1996), 11.
- ⁸ The original comparison of Defense and NGO characteristics was compiled by now-retired AMB Lauralee Peters in 1997 for a Naval War College elective course on disaster relief, and is used with her permission. The author, a field grade equivalent Foreign Service Officer, added the middle column of State attributes.
- ⁹ 'State' in this discussion includes both civil service and Foreign Service employees of the Department of State working both in overseas missions and in support of them in Washington, as well as career and long-term contract professional staff of the other Foreign Affairs agencies, for example the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Information Agency (USIA).
- ¹⁰ Peters, Lauralee, Ambassador (RET), telephone conversation with author, April 11, 1999.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Figures compiled in 1997 from State statistics for use in the 1997 Naval War College disaster relief elective course conducted by now-retired AMB Lauralee Peters.
- ¹³ Department of the Army, Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (FM 90-29)(Washington, DC:1994), 3-8.
- ¹⁴ in accordance with DOD-DOS Memorandum of Understanding on the Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Designated Aliens Abroad (Washington:1994), para 2.g.
- ¹⁵ Taylor, Paul, Ambassador (RET), interview by author, April 15 1999, Sims Hall, Naval War College, notes.
- ¹⁶ in accordance with DOD-DOS Memorandum of Understanding on the Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens, para D.2.
- ¹⁷ Clark, Ray, "Noncombatant Evacuation Operations:Major Considerations for the Operational Commander," (Unpublished Research Paper, Naval War College, Newport,RI:1995), 5.
- ¹⁸ Wilson, James, Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It (New York City, Harper Collins, 1989), 91.
- ¹⁹ Gee, Wendy, "The Principles of Noncombatant Evacuation Operations: A Prerequisite for Joint Doctrine," (Unpublished Research Paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI:1994), 25.
- ²⁰ Scott, Gerald, Ambassador, interview by author, April 20, 1999, Spruance Hall, Naval War College, notes.

Attachment I
Comparing Characteristics*

DEFENSE	STATE	NGOs
disciplined	disciplined	independent
hierarchical	unit based	decentralized
C ³ I	mixed	C ³ A
MOS training	professional education	OJT
explicit doctrine	traditional responses	few field manuals
quick fix	long haul	long haul
end date	end state	end state
combat experience	field experience	field experience

* Defense and NGO columns are reproduced from a slide prepared by now-retired AMB Lauralee Peters for a disaster relief course presentation during the 1997-98 Naval War College academic year, and used with her permission. The author, a field grade equivalent Foreign Service Officer, added the center column in bold type to provide a State comparison.

Attachment II



CHAINS OF COMMAND

Attachment III

NEO Attributes
as viewed by:

DEFENSE

tactical
military
quick in-and-out
cost
training
overwhelming force
evacuation
everybody out

STATE

operational
political
long-range goals
effect
experience
adequate force
protection
limited participation

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